

# DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

WORKING OUTLINE #4: JANUARY 27, 2005

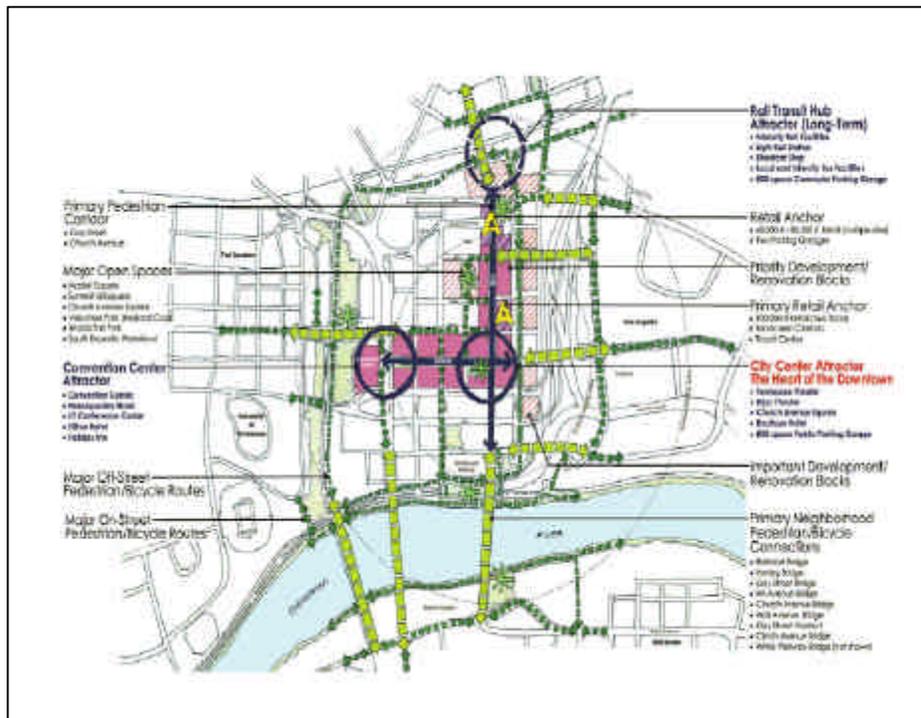
## **PART I: CIVIC VISION** (From Civic Vision for Downtown Knoxville, produced by Crandall Arambula, commissioned by Nine Counties One Vision)

While many of the specific projects pursued in the downtown may change over time, the Guiding Principles and Urban Design Frameworks provide enduring goals for unanticipated downtown opportunities.

### 1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

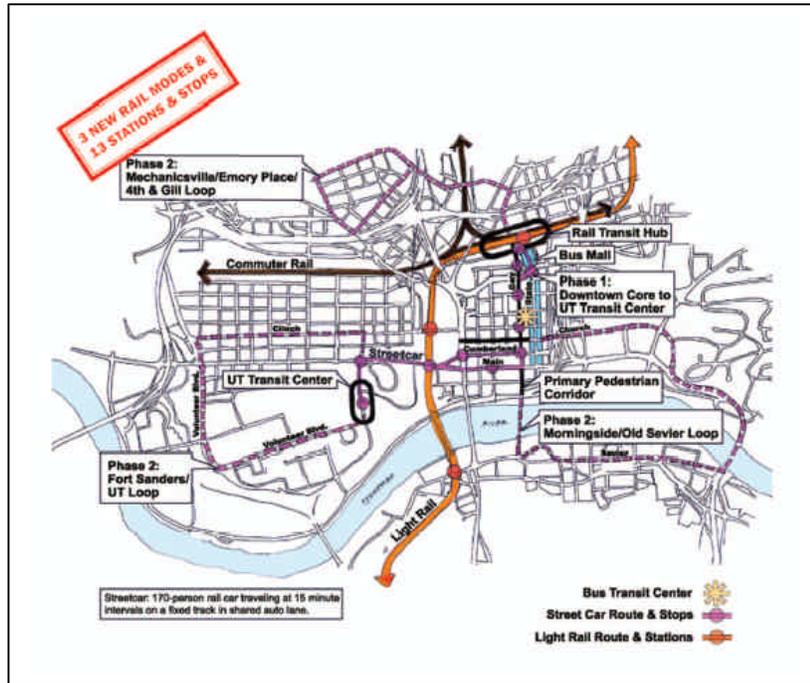
- **GOAL: Establish Downtown Knoxville as the economic and cultural heart of the region: a vibrant, walkable place where people congregate to live, work, shop and play.**
  - a. Make Downtown a regional destination that is vibrant and livable.
  - b. Respect the natural and historic setting.
  - c. Create a vibrant social environment downtown.
  - d. Establish and perpetuate the character and quality of downtown districts.
  - e. Take appropriate advantage of opportunities for downtown housing.
  - f. Invest significant resources in the commercial capacity of downtown.
  - g. Enhance downtown as a center for government, while maintaining balance with other uses.
  - h. Design a pedestrian friendly downtown, with safe, appealing streets and public spaces.
  - i. Create a transportation system that balances pedestrians, transit, and convenient parking.
  - j. Reconnect downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, both functionally and visually.

### FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT: FROM CRANDALL ARAMBULA RECOMMENDATIONS

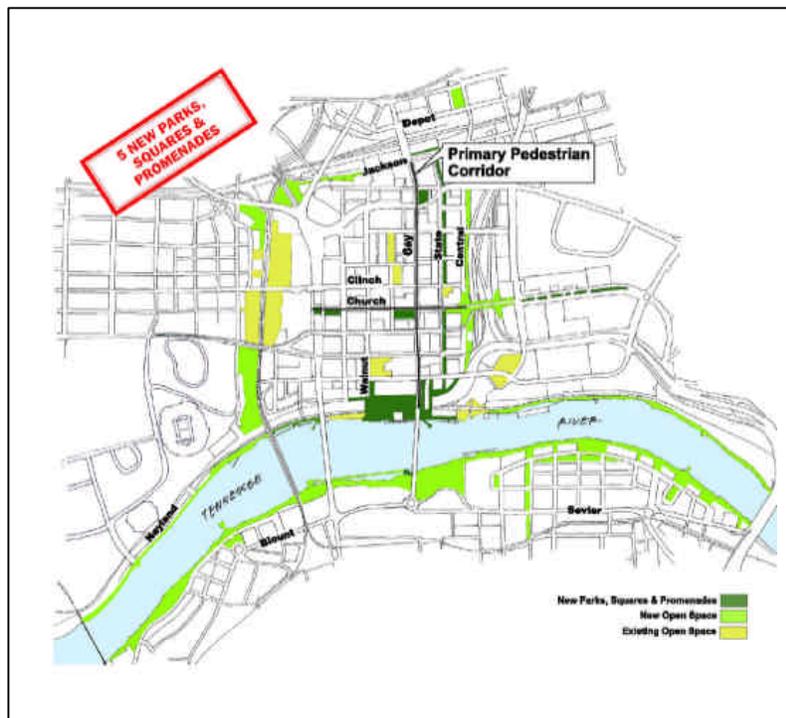


## 2. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORKS

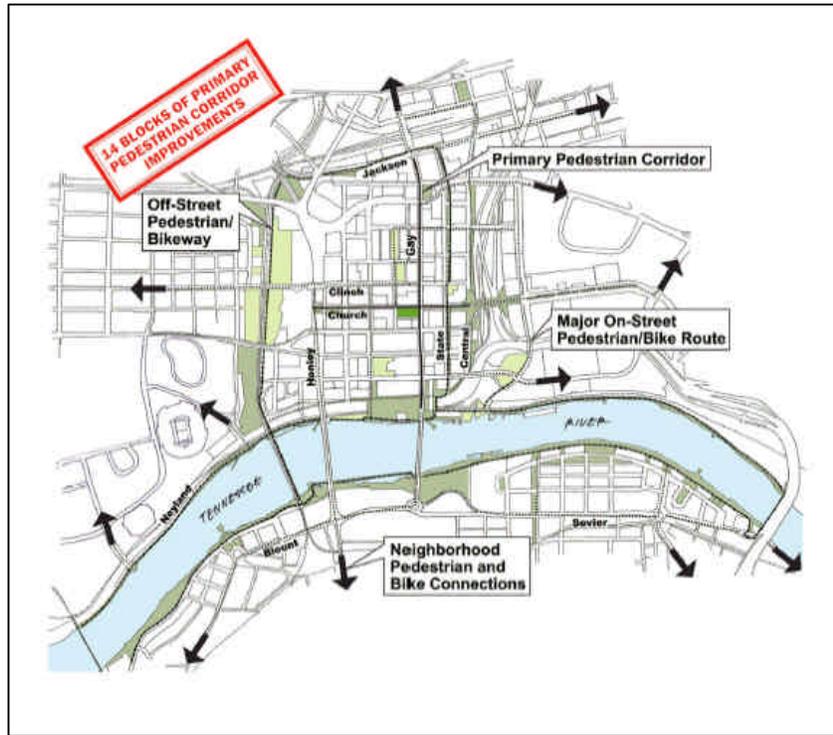
### a. Transit Framework



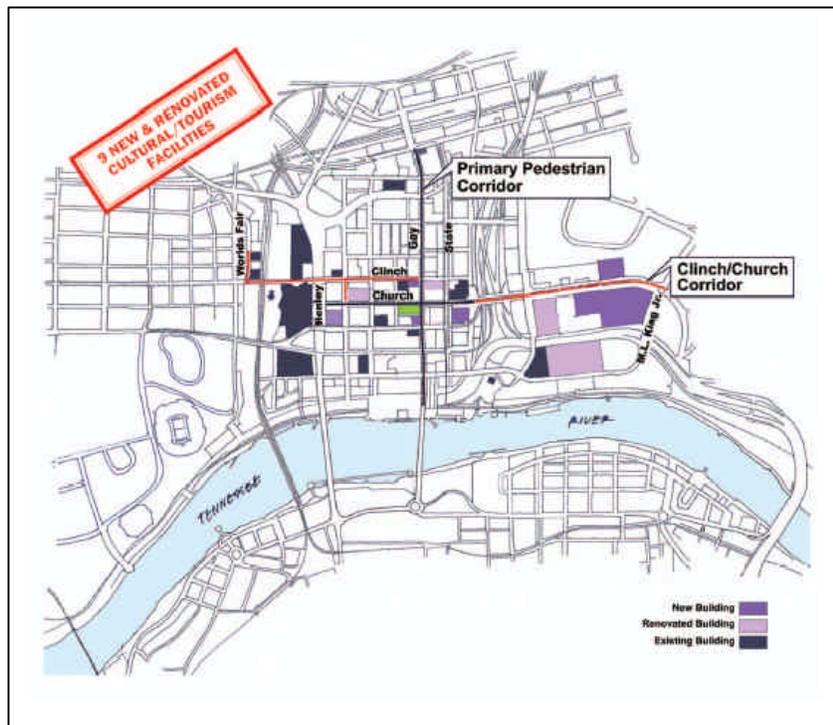
### b. Open Space Framework



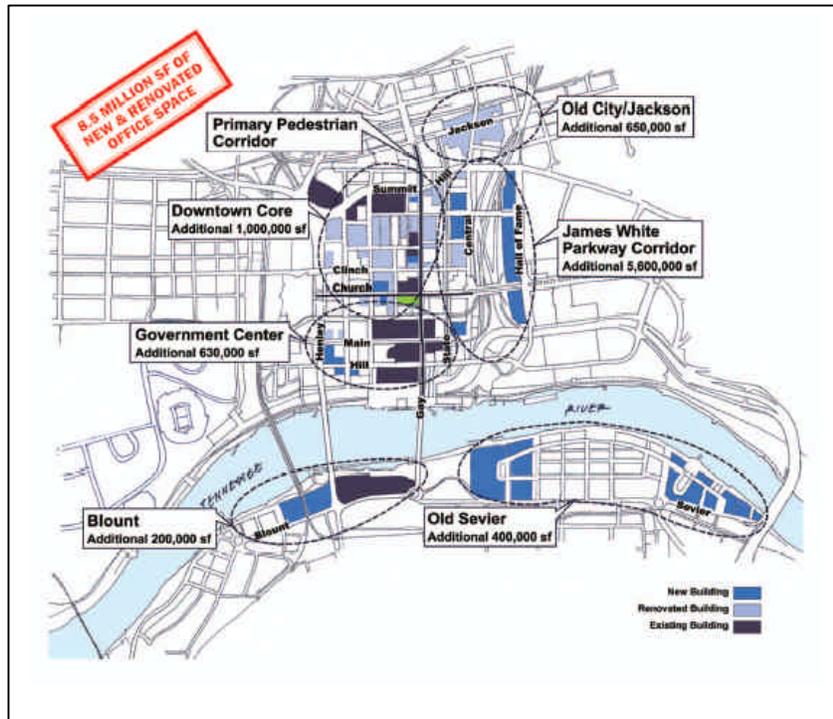
c. Pedestrian / Bike Framework



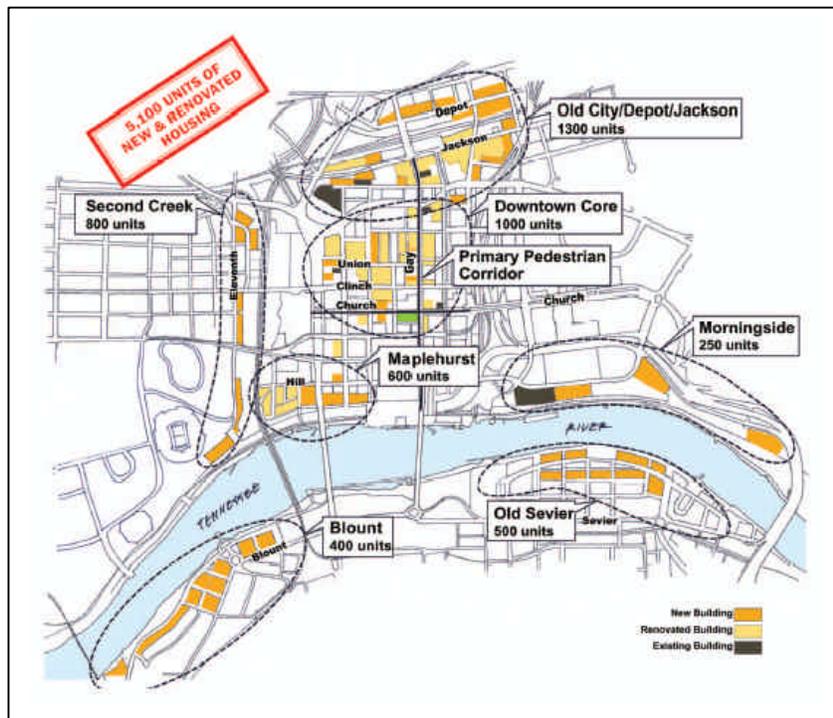
d. Cultural / Tourism Framework



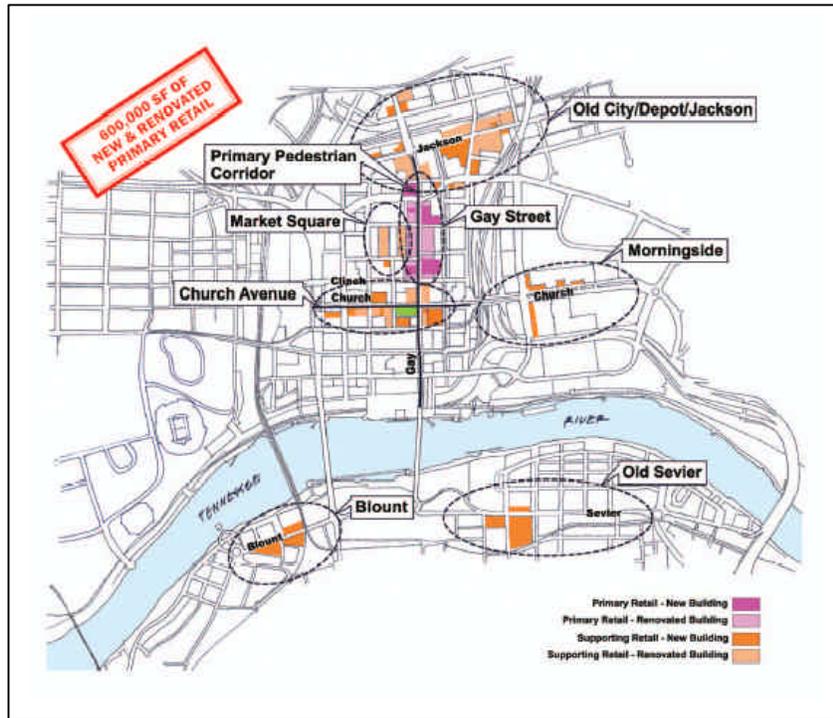
e. Employment Framework



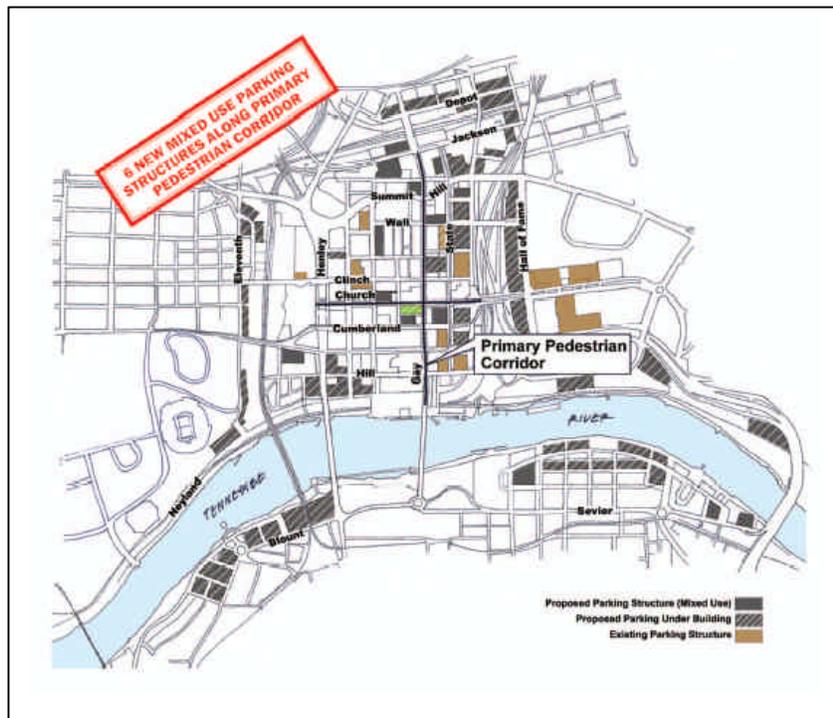
f. Housing Framework



g. Retail Framework

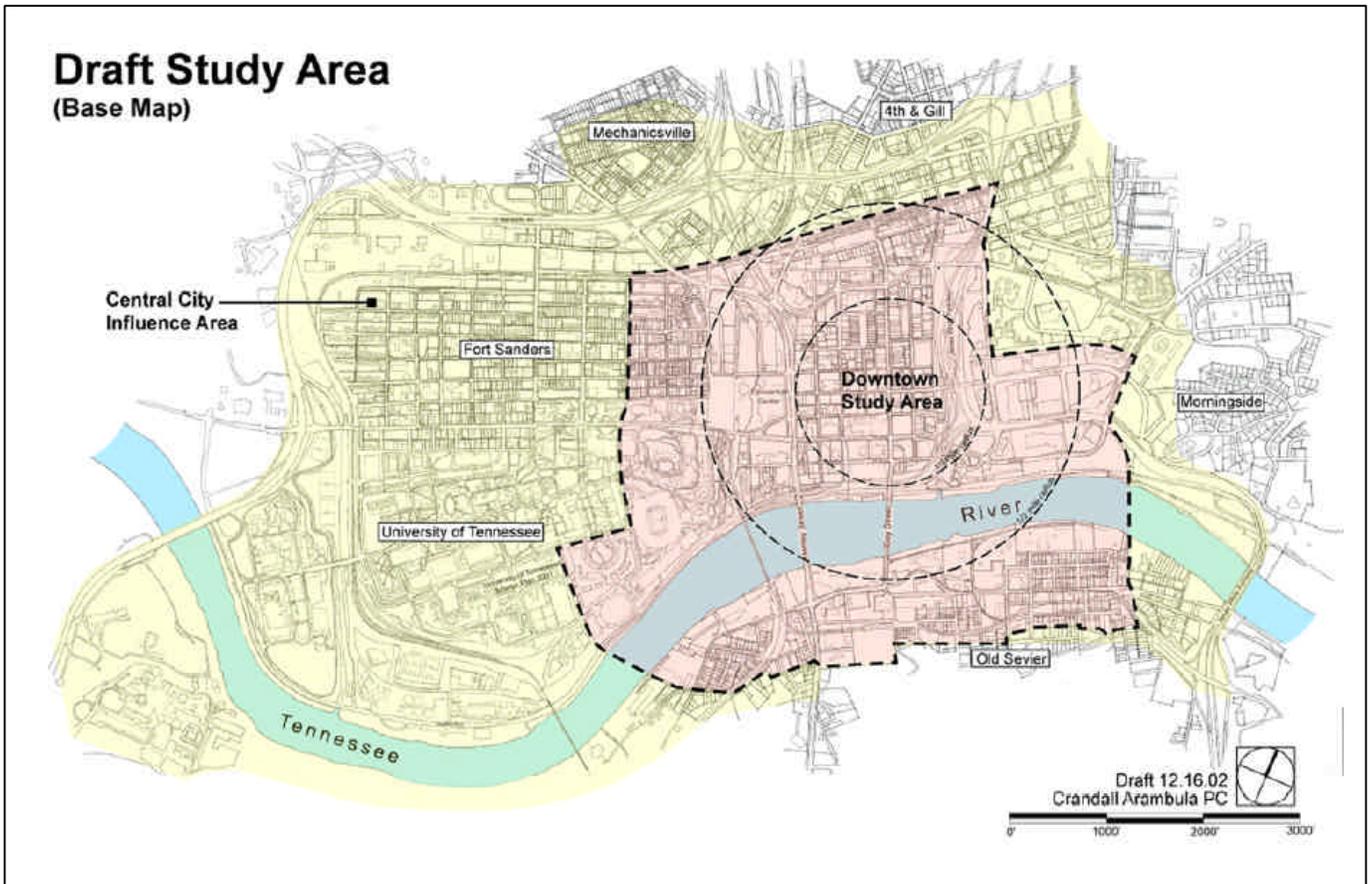


h. Parking Framework



### 3. CONNECTIVITY & ADJACENCY

- a. South Waterfront / South Knoxville
  - i. Feasibility Study to be completed by April 2005
- b. Fort Sanders
- c. University of Tennessee
- d. Cumberland Avenue Retail Corridor
  - i. Draft Scope of Work prepared for TDOT review
- e. Fourth & Gill Historic District
- f. Mechanicsville
- g. Old North Knoxville
- h. Morningside
- i. Old Sevier



# **PART II: 5-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

**(Downtown Advisory Committee Focus)**

## **1. RECENT SUCCESSES / ONGOING PROJECTS**

- a. Market Square Parking Garage
- b. Movie Theater
- c. Transit Center
- d. Tennessee Theater
- e. TVA East Tower purchase
- f. Rio TIF
- g. Mast General Store TIF
- h. World's Fair Park RFP Process

## **2. NEXT STEPS: ACTION ITEMS**

- **Priority #1: A Retail Revitalization Strategy**

**Action** Focus efforts to build the retail capacity of Gay Street, thereby strengthening retail activity in other areas and providing a more attractive downtown for workers, residents, and visitors.

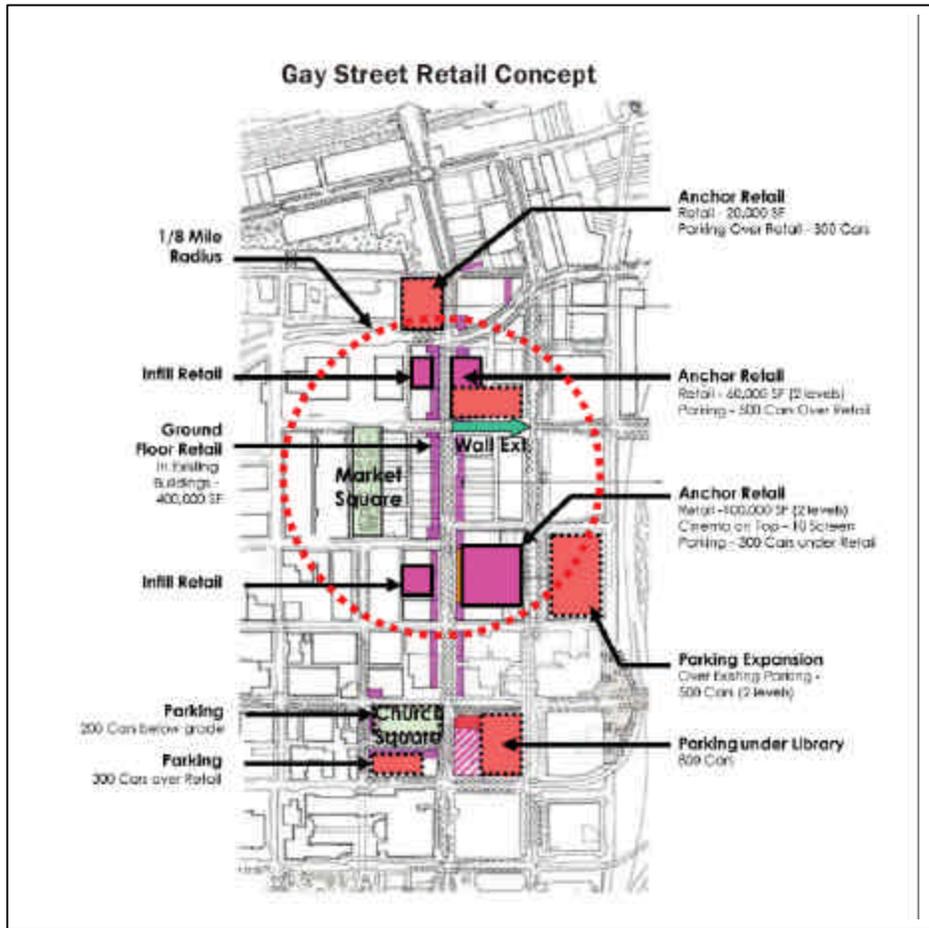
**Why** CA believed that a focused downtown retail strategy and implementation for Gay Street was an essential priority for the economic vitality of downtown. There is no single person or entity that has downtown design and development as a primary responsibility.

**Current Status** CA provided a retail market analysis and plan, with recommendations (50 pages). Significant retail activity is underway, and existing retailers are thriving in comparison to past years. The CBID/KACP efforts for economic development include Downtown retail.

**Options** Newly formed downtown organization could oversee efforts in this area. The city, or designee, could engage a person/expert to develop and implement the downtown retail strategy, including recruitment, administration of incentives, and management of retail efforts.

**Notes** Retail activity and development is ad hoc and lacks coordination. City Council is approached on a case-by-case basis for approval of economic development incentives. Public assistance in the form of streetscape or infrastructure improvements to support private investment is not consistently available.

- 1. Strategy for recruitment of retail anchor tenants
- 2. Strategy for recruitment of smaller storefront tenants
- 3. Conditions affecting retail success
- 4. Tactical approaches to retail implementation
- 5. Retail management



- **Priority #2: Priority Projects (See Separate Table)**

**Action** Identify priority projects, based on economic viability, time horizon with 5 years, community needs, governmental policies, and consistency with civic vision principles, frameworks, and priorities.

**Why** It is important to prioritize resources for maximum benefit, with specific emphasis on the use of public funds to realize a positive return on investment.

**Current Status** CA identified "priority projects" and "time sensitive projects" recommended for immediate attention. TSG and DAC have begun updating, organizing, and prioritizing the list of all projects identified by CA.

- TSG identified three important areas of concern:
- Transportation issues, especially I40 / James White Parkway impact on downtown;
  - The need for a centralized and comprehensive management of parking; and
  - Improvement of the pedestrian experience: streetscape, signage, lighting, and other design elements.

**Notes** Current status of DAC list is attached.

• **Priority #3:**

**Regulations and Design Guidelines**

<b>Action</b>	The city should initiate a process to develop and adopt appropriate design guidelines, including streetscape issues.
<b>Why</b>	Flexible design guidelines ensure quality in design and development. Good guidelines are flexible and assure predictability in the development process.
<b>Current Status</b>	Current historic designations affect some properties through design review by the Historic Landmark Commission. Design guidelines do not exist for the entire downtown, although design guidelines do exist for Market Square.
<b>Options</b>	TSG will provide examples of flexible design guidelines used by other cities that allow freedom in design decisions. MPC could lead the process for developing design guidelines with community input, or a consultant contract could be managed by MPC to assist in development of guidelines.
<b>Recommendation</b>	DAC recommends that the city initiate a process to develop downtown design guidelines. Emphasis should be on the pedestrian experience and the streetscape environment, and should not focus on architectural design. The process for review and approval should be simple and straight forward.

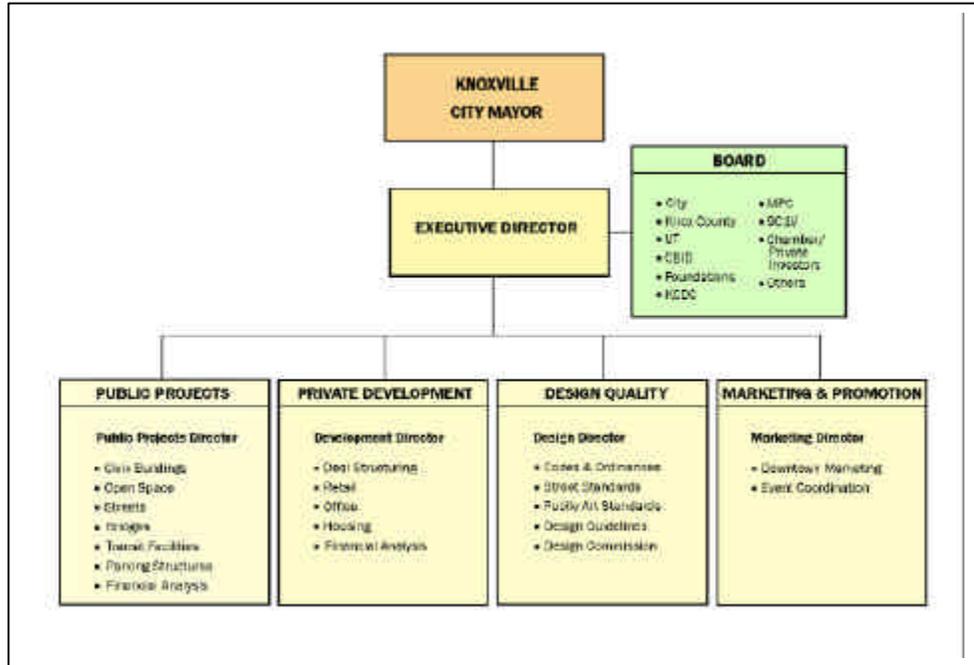
**POTENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES CONTENTS**

1. Update existing policies and ordinances
2. Design Guidelines
  - a. Knoxville character
  - b. Streetscape / landscaping concepts
  - c. Building compatibility
  - d. Street Lighting
  - e. Signage
  - f. Public Safety
3. Public Area Requirements
  - a. General circulation requirements
  - b. Street standards
  - c. Design Details

• **Priority #4:**

**An Organization to Implement the Civic Vision**

<b>Action</b>	Form an organization with authority to oversee downtown development and design.
<b>Why</b>	There is an absence of coordination in downtown efforts. There is no single person or entity that has downtown design and development as a primary responsibility.
<b>Current Status</b>	CA outlined a proposal for an independent entity. TSG is preparing an inventory of existing organizations/entities and responsibilities.
<b>Options</b>	TSG will develop 2-4 alternative structures for discussion and consideration.
<b>Notes</b>	TSG recommends a person or organization be designated for downtown issues, but lacks consensus as to whether this organization is a new entity or a modification of an existing organization or structure, or as to whether this organization is independent or part of city structure.



**Organizational Chart Recommended by Crandall-Arambula**

**POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS**

1. Public Projects
  - a. Civic Buildings
  - b. Open Space
  - c. Streets
  - d. Bridges
  - e. Transit Facilities
  - f. Parking Structures
  - g. Financial Analyses
2. Private Development
  - a. Deal Structuring
  - b. Retail
  - c. Office
  - d. Housing
  - e. Financial Analyses
3. Design Quality
  - a. Codes & Ordinances
  - b. Street Standards
  - c. Public Art Standards
  - d. Design Guidelines
  - e. Design Commission
4. Marketing & Promotion
  - a. Downtown Marketing
  - b. Event Coordination

- Priority #5: Final Plan Document**

<b>Action</b>	Develop a document / conceptual plan for adoption by City Council. Develop a document / concise visual summary for clear communication of policies, priorities, and plans.
<b>Why</b>	CA did extensive work, w/ public process, but a conceptual plan has not been adopted formally. The city needs a concise summary of downtown concepts, principles, frameworks, and priorities, establishing a basis for future decisions. No clear summary exists: there is confusion about what CA recommended. The last plan formally approved for the city is the 1988 Downtown Plan. The city has dozens of separate reports, studies, and plans, but no comprehensive statement.
<b>Current Status</b>	This working outline is being used to draft a final document with two components: (1) the Civic Vision, using products from the Crandall Arambula recommendations to describe the long-term goals for the downtown; and (2) the 5-Year Implementation Strategy, using the Crandall Arambula recommendations and DAC discussions to decide short-term actions that should be pursued. MPC has adopted the Civic Vision Principles in its downtown sector plan.
<b>Options</b>	Using existing processes, MPC can incorporate more specific aspects of the Civic Vision for Downtown into a plan adopted by City Council and County Commission, similar to the processes for the adoption of 1988 Downtown Plan. Other processes could be developed to secure the endorsement of the elected officials for a downtown plan. A concise summary of the Civic Vision should be available for broad public understanding, such as a flyer, brochure, or poster.
<b>Recommendation</b>	DAC will continue to make revisions to the working outline in the interest of producing a final plan document.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

#### a. Downtown Economic Development Policy

1. Operating Principles
  - a. Conformity with Civic Vision
  - b. Sound Business Practice
    - a. Specify principles implied in Economic Development application
  - c. Compliance with Historic & Urban Design Guidelines
2. Financial Resources
  - a. Capital Improvements Program
  - b. Annual Budget
  - c. CBID
  - d. CDBG / HOME funds
  - e. Tax Increment Financing
    - a. Designate entire downtown a redevelopment district?
3. Public versus Private Investment Expectations
4. Activity Programming
5. Marketing
6. Organizational Capacity, Coordination, and Responsibilities

### 4. MAP